

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015KE131
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Name of Service:	Cocoon Childcare- Naas
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Address of Service:	Millennium Park, Naas, Co. Kildare
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Eircode:	W91 X211
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Name of Registered Provider:	Nicola Battams
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	07/04/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	102	PM	90
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Suite 7, Vista Primary Care, Ballymore Eustace Rd, Naas, Co Kildare
Inspection undertaken by:	R. Brien & E. Mulhern
Title:	Early Years Inspectors

Authority to Inspect

The Tusla Early Years Inspectorate carries out inspections of Early Years Services under Section 58(J) of the Child Care Act 1991 (as inserted by Section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013).

Conditions if applicable	N/A
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Description of service

Cocoon Childcare Naas is one of 15 childcare services operated by the registered provider. The service provides full day, part-time and sessional care and caters for children from 0 to 6 years. The service is registered to operate from 07:15 to 18:30, Monday to Friday. Sessional care is provided from 09:00 to 12:00.

The service is located in a business park on the outskirts of Naas, Co Kildare and operates from a purpose-built single storey premises.

There are eight care rooms in the service. The Baby room caters for children from 8 months to 1 year. The Wobbler Junior room caters for children aged 1 year. The Wobbler Senior room caters for children aged 1 to 2 years. The Toddler Junior room caters for children aged 2 years. The Toddler Senior room caters for children aged 2 to 3 years. The Preschool 1 and Preschool 2 rooms caters for children aged 3 to 5 years and the Preschool 3 room caters for children aged 3 to 4 years. There is a dedicated cot room and a fully enclosed outdoor play area to the rear and side of the building.

Staffing

The service currently employs 32 staff members including the service manager, two chefs and 3 staff members who work with school aged children.

Twenty-seven staff members are employed to work directly with the pre-school children. There were 24 staff working directly with the children on the day of inspection. This included the operations manager and two adults from another centre operated by the registered provider who arrived following the inspector's arrival. The registered provider does not work directly in the service but arrived in the afternoon and was present for the closing meeting.

Methodology

Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate is the independent statutory regulator of early years services in Ireland. The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 define the duty of a registered provider to ensure the safety and well-being of children and to comply with these regulations. This Act also gives Tusla the authority to assess compliance with the regulations. The purpose of regulation in relation to early years services is to ensure that the care, safety, and well-being of children attending such services is upheld. Inspections of early years services are planned based on the following:

- Previous inspection history
- Any information received in relation to the service

The findings on inspection are based on:

- Information obtained through examination of documentation
- Direct observation
- Discussion with relevant staff

This inspection was unannounced and focused on the area of governance/ records/ health, welfare and development of child and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

9 (1)(a)(b),(2)(a)(b)(c)(d),(4) – Management and recruitment,
11 (1),(2),(8)(a) – Staffing levels,
16 (1)(h)(i)(j)(k) – Record in relation to pre-school service,
19 (1)(a)(b) – Health, welfare and development of child,
23 – Safeguarding, health, safety and welfare of child.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under the following regulations;

16 (1)(h) – Record in relation to pre-school service.
19 (1)(a)(b) – Health, welfare and development of child,
23 – Safeguarding, health, safety and welfare of child.

As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Baby and Wobbler Junior rooms.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 16 (1)(j),(k) – Record in relation to pre-school service.

Inspection findings are documented in the inspection report which is first issued in draft format to the service with an opportunity to respond to any findings. Where statutory requirements are identified as not being met, the registered provider must demonstrate how they have rectified the non-compliance and will prevent any non-compliance from re occurring. The Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan (CAPA) will be used to inform decisions about compliance with regulatory requirements. Where the registered provider fails to meet the statutory requirements an escalation process may be commenced.

The inspectorate reserves the right to edit responses received for reasons including clarity, completeness and compliance with administrative and legal processes.

The contents of the report are compiled by the inspectorate body.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, person in charge, operations manager, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that-

- (a) the service has a designated person in charge and a named person who is able to deputise as required,
- (b) at all times during the period when the pre-school service is being carried on, the designated person in charge or the named person referred to in subparagraph (a) is on the premises, and

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that each employee, unpaid worker and contractor is suitable and competent taking into consideration the nature of the needs of children, including by-

- (a) consideration of references from the person's past employers, if any, and in particular the most recent employer, if any,
- (b) consideration of references from reputable sources in the case of a person who has no past employers,
- (c) consideration of the vetting disclosure received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 in respect of the person, and
- (d) ensuring, insofar as is practicable, that where a person has lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months, he or she provides police vetting from the police authorities in that state.

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that, without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (2) and subject to paragraphs (5) and (6), each employee working directly with children attending the service holds at least a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

Compliance Information

(1)
(a)(b)
The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required who were both on the premises throughout the inspection.

(2)
The inspection focused on the recruitment records for five staff employed since the last inspection on 10th December 2024 and two staff from another centre operated by the registered provider who were present during

the inspection. Documentation was reviewed in respect of these adults and met regulatory requirements as follows;

(a)(b)

Of the 14 validated, written references that were required, 11 were available from a past employer and 3 were available from a reputable source.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau of An Garda Síochána were available for the seven adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d)

Police vetting was required for six staff members and was available for the six staff members who had lived outside the State for a period exceeding 6 months as an adult.

(4)

Records were available evidencing that the five staff members who were employed to work directly with the children held the required qualification or equivalent.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

(1) Subject to this Regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that there is at all times an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.

(2) Subject to paragraphs (4) and (5), a registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 1 of Schedule 6 opposite a particular reference number specified in column (1) of that Part in respect of the age range of the children specified in column (2) thereof at that reference number is satisfied.

(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-

(a) a registered provider of a pre-school service other than a child-minding service or a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times

Compliance Information

(1)

An adequate number of adults were working directly with the children at all times during the inspection.

(2)

The minimum ratio of adults to children for full day care services were adhered to at all times during the inspection. There were 102 children attending the service being supervised by 24 adults on the day of inspection.

(8)(a)

There were at least two adults on the premises at all times.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:

(h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;

(i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;

(j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;

(k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

Compliance Information

(h)

Details of the attendance of each child in the Baby and Wobbler Junior rooms were recorded at the time of entering and leaving the service.

(i)

The staff roster was available on the day of inspection and reflected the adults working in the service.

(k)
A sample of 10 accident and incidents records were reviewed. These records were signed by staff and parents and were completed appropriately.

Non-Compliance Information

(j)
A sample of 10 medication administration records were reviewed. Seven of these records did not detail the name of the medication administered to children. Failure to accurately document the administration of medication may pose a risk to the continuity of care of the child.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(j)
Our Medication administration form was updated to state name of medication being administered. All team members have received training on the new form and understand this requirement. The centre management team collect and file the medication forms weekly and will ensure that each form is thoroughly checked to ensure they are being completed correctly.

Supporting documentation submitted

Written evidence was presented to demonstrate the corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions as stated by the registered provider have been deemed to address this non-compliance.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child

(1) A registered provider shall, in providing a pre-school service, ensure that-

(a) each child's learning, development and well-being is facilitated within the daily life of the pre-school service through the provision of the appropriate activities, interaction, materials and equipment, having regard to the age and stage of development of the child, and

(b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.

Compliance Information

The service had a healthy eating policy in place and all meals are provided by the service. Meals were provided at regular intervals. Dinner was served at 11:30. All children were given bibs for dinnertime. Drinking water was available to children throughout the inspection and children were given a drink with their meals.

Children's care needs were observed to be met promptly. Staff were observed cleaning children's noses as required and children's hands and faces were cleaned after dinner. In the Wobbler Junior room, children's independence was supported, staff were observed encouraging children to clean their own faces after dinner. Staff were observed changing children's clothing which had become wet following dinner. Children's nappies were changed regularly, and staff were observed engaging warmly with children when providing this care.

Children in the Baby room were placed to sleep when they displayed signs of tiredness and there was a designated nap time for children attending the Wobbler Junior room. Cots were provided appropriate to the children's age and stage of development. All children were made comfortable for sleep; staff removed children's shoes and outer clothing; they provided the children with blankets, and they offered soothers to those who used them. The environments were calm and conducive to sleep, with staff soothing the children as needed during this time.

The service had a key person system in place. Staff demonstrated a good awareness of the needs of each child in their care and responded to children's cues promptly. Staff demonstrated warmth and sensitivity during their interactions with the children throughout the inspection. Children were comforted promptly when they became upset. Staff were observed holding children and speaking to them softly. Staff provided an appropriate level of supervision whilst supporting the children's independence during play and mealtimes. Staff were observed to use distraction, gentle tones and praise when promoting positive behaviour in line with the service's behaviour policy.

Staff described how they communicate with parents regarding their child's day at arrival and collection times and parents were observed in the service during these times. Information regarding each child's day detailing information on food, sleep, nappy changes and activities was recorded on a handover sheet which was given to parents at collection time.

The care rooms were arranged into areas of interest including home corners, cause and effect toys, rest areas with books and sensory play materials providing children with the freedom to play and explore. The care rooms provided a range of developmentally appropriate play experiences for the children and were adequately resourced with a variety of materials.

The environments were laid out to support the children's independence. Play materials were observed to be accessible to the children on low level shelving. Low level tables and chairs were available in the care rooms.

A fully enclosed outdoor play area was located to the side of the premises and had artificial grass surfacing. A range of developmentally appropriate play equipment was provided in the outdoor play area. Children from the Baby and Wobbler Junior rooms were provided with the opportunity to play outdoors and were dressed appropriately to the weather.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(b)

One child in the Baby room, aged 1 year, was not provided with the opportunity to feed themselves during dinnertime. A staff member held the bowl away from the child and spoon-fed the child. The child was not provided with the opportunity to develop hand-eye coordination and fine motor skills and to promote independence.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The centre management team have conducted training with the baby room staff team on promoting independence at mealtimes with particular emphasis on each child's bowl being accessible to them.

The Baby room team members also availed of external training focusing on effectively managing meal and snack times, whilst supporting children's autonomy in self-feeding and strategies for providing a safe and comfortable feeding environment. The Centre Management team will continue to carry out regular observations at mealtimes.

Supporting documentation submitted

Written evidence was presented to demonstrate the corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions as stated by the registered provider have been deemed to address this non-compliance.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

A registered provider shall ensure that all reasonable measures are taken to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of a pre-school child attending the service and that the environment of the service is safe.

Compliance Information

General Safety:

- The entrance door to the service was adequately secured to ensure the safety of the children within and to avoid unauthorised persons accessing the service or children exiting unsupervised.
- The toys and play equipment observed in use by the children on the day of inspection appeared in good working order.
- Cleaning agents and medicines were stored safely out of reach of children.
- All storage facilities were inaccessible to children.
- All blind cords were secured.

Infection Control:

- Waste was managed appropriately with the use of pedal bins.
- A system was in place for effective sterilisation of soothers.
- Individual bed linen was provided for children and was stored separately when not in use. Staff stated that bed linen is laundered weekly or as required.
- All cot mattresses in use had waterproof covers.

Administration of Medication:

- The service had an administration of medication policy in place. There was a documented care plan available for a child attending the service who required emergency medication. Staff working in the room

with the child were aware of the treatment plan and demonstrated a thorough knowledge of the procedures to follow if the medication was required.

- Staff demonstrated, through discussion, that they were familiar with the procedures and practices in place for the administration of medication in line with the services policy on medication administration.

Safe Sleep:

- Children were physically monitored while sleeping and sleep checks were documented. Discussion with staff demonstrated that staff were familiar with safe sleep guidelines.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

Inspectors observed practices which posed a risk of transmission of infection within the service:

1. The handwashing practices observed were inconsistent on the day of inspection and at variance with the policy in place in the service. In the Baby room, children's hands were not washed following outdoor play or before dinner.
2. Some nappy changing practices observed on the day of inspection in the service were inadequate for infection control purposes. Two children were observed with their soothers in their mouths throughout nappy changes.
3. In the Wobbler Junior room, there was no soap in the soap dispenser at the sink in the care room which was used by the children for handwashing before eating.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

1. All team members have been retrained in our handwashing policy.
2. As many children have transitional items that support self-soothing and it may cause distress to remove these items, we have updated our Nappy changing policy to include 'Any items brought into the changing area must be sterilised on return to care room i.e. soother, transitional object etc.' All team members have received training on the updated policy and understand this requirement.

3. The soap dispenser was replaced immediately after the inspection took place. The centre cleaner will check and fill all dispensers each morning as part of their morning cleaning schedule. If for any reason dispensers are emptied, staff are aware to replace the empty dispensers as needed throughout the day.

The Centre Management team will continue to support the baby care team and carry out regular observations of nappy changing procedures, mealtime procedures and handwashing procedures within the baby care unit, to ensure correct procedures are adhered to.

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection Control:

Written evidence was presented to demonstrate the corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions as stated by the registered provider have been deemed to address these non-compliances.